

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 074

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 4312

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EFIN, PINT, PE

SUBJECT: CONTINUED REACTIONS TO AUSTERITY MEASURES

REF: LIMA 4274

1. SUMMARY:. LIMA REMAINS VERY TENSE, BUT BY AND LARGE BUSINESS AS USUAL. ATTEMPTED MARCH ON PALACE EVENING OF MAY 17 PRODUCED ONLY SMALL TURNOUT AND WAS EASILY DISPERESED BY POLICE. DISTRUBANCES CONTINUE, HOWEVER, IN A NUMBER OF PROVINCIAL CITIES, WITH TROOPS OUT IN THE STREETS IN AT LEAST AREQUIPA, CUZCO, CHICALYAO AND HUANUCO. AREQUIPA APPEARS TO BE THE MOST DANGEROUS SITUATION, WITH 2 DEATHS REPORTED, BUT DISTURBANCES THERE REPORTEDLY SUBSIDED SLIGHTLY MAY 17 COMPARED WITH MAY 16. LEFT WING UNIONS AND PARTIES ARE DISCUSSING POSSIBLE GENERAL STRIKE MAY 26. THE ELECTION BOARD IS CONSIDERING A REQUEST FOR SLIGHT POSTPONTMENT OF THE JUNE 4 ELECTION IN VIEW OF LAGGING ADMINISTRATIVE PREPARATIONS IN THE PROVINCES, BUT CHIEF OF JOINT COMMAND RICHTER PRADA TOLD US GOVERNMENT
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REMAINS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH ELECTIONS AS SCHEDULED. END SUMMARY.

2. SITUATION IN LIMA MAY - ALTHOUGH RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC WAS STILL BELOW NORMAL, ACTIVITY IN LIMA IS BY AND LARGE AT ITS HABITUAL PACE. THERE IS WIDESPREAD TENSION, BUT NO INCIDENCES OF VIOLENCE INVOLVING PERSONAL

INJURY WERE REPORTED. STATE-OWNED SUPERMARKETS CONTINUE TO SELL COOKING OIL, CANNED MILK AND FLOUR AT OLD PRICES, RESULTING IN LONG LINES THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF SPARKING CONFRONTATIONS AND VIOLENCE. THIS IS THE LAST DAY THAT OLD PRICES WILL PREVAIL. BUYERS WAITING IN LINE TO ENTER THE STATE-OWNED SUPERMARKET TWO BLOCKS FROM THE CHANCERY WERE INVOLVED IN A SCUFFLE WITH POLICE YESTERDAY AS SOME CUSTOMERS TRIED TO ENTER THE OFFICES OF THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION. CALM WAS QUICKLY RESTORED. THE CIVIL GUARD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY WITH APCs AT KEY POINTS. IN THE FACTORY DISTRICT CALLAO, WORK ROUTINES HAVE RETURNED TO ALMOST NORMAL. SMALL BANDS OF YOUTHS REPORTEDLY WERE SEEN ROAMING THE STREETS OF LA VICTORIA A POORER DISTRICT YESTERDAY, TRYING TO INCITE LOOTING AND VIOLENCE. THEIR EFFORTS WERE APPARENTLY UNSUCCESSFUL AND SIMILAR INCIDENTS WERE NOT REPORTED TODAY.

3. OUTSIDE OF LIMA - TODAY'S PRESS CONFIRMS THAT TWO MEN AND ONE WOMAN WERE KILLED IN THE DEPARTMENT CAPITAL OF HUANUCO ON MAY 15, AFTER AN ANGRY CROWD ATTACKED POLICE. FOURTEEN WERE WOUNDED, INCLUDING TWO POLICE. ANOTHER ATTACK AGAINST POLICE ON MAY 16 RESULTED IN ONE DEATH. FOR A TOTAL OF FOUR FATALITIES. ACCORDING TO AN INTERIOR MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE, THE SITUATION RETURNED TO NORMAL WITH THE POSITIONING OF TROOPS IN THE SIERRA TOWN.

4. IN AREQUIPA--YESTERDAY CROWDS OF PROTESTERS TRIED TO SET
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FIRE TO A LOCAL TV STATION AND ALSO TO A RADIO STATION. BOTH CLOSED DOWN FOR A SHORT PERIOD AND BANKS AND STORES WERE SHUTTERED. MORE THAN 1000 DEMONSTRATORS WERE REPORTEDLY ARRESTED. ACCORDING TO UNCONFIRMED REPORTS, TWO PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED: A WOMAN IN A DISTURBANCE AT THE MARKET AND A BOY AT THE RACETRACK, WHICH WAS BURNED DOWN BY A MOB. BARRICADES AND SMALL FIRES DOTTED MANY STREETS, INTERDICTING NORMAL TRAFFIC. TODAY MOST STORES AND BUSINESSES ARE CLOSED AND THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE IS TENSE BUT OUR LATEST REPORT IS THAT DISTURBANCES DECREASED MAY 17 COMPARED WITH MAY 16.

5. IN TRUJILLO--THERE WAS LITTLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ON MAY 16, PROBABLY BECAUSE MINOR INCIDENTS IN THE PUEBLOS JOVENES FRIGHTENED BUS DRIVERS INTO STAYING HOME. THERE ARE UNVERIFIED REPORTS OF LOOTING IN A FEW PLACES. STORES AND BUSINESSES ARE OPEN ON A PART TIME BASIS. THE SITUATION IS REPORTEDLY CALM TODAY, BUT THE TENSION REMAINS.

6. IN CHICLAYO--THE GUARDIA CIVIL MOVED TO CHIMBOTE AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AND THE LOCAL POPULACE IMMEDIATELY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO LOOT THE LOCAL MARKET, SET FIRE TO STORES, OVERTURN AND BURN CARS AND TRUCKS LAST NIGHT. STORES

ARE CLOSED NOW AND THE STREETS ARE FULL OF ARMY TROOPS.

7. IN CUZCO THE GENRAL STRIKE CONTINUES TO BE GENERALLY EFFECTIVE, WITH PROTESTERS TAUNTING THE POLICE, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO VIOLENCE AND NO ARRESTS. TRANSPORT IS VIRTUALLY PARALYZED, INCLUDING THE TRAINS TO MACHU PICCHU, SOME STREETS ARE TORN UP AND THERE ARE FEW PRIVATE VEHICLES ON THE STREET SOLDIERS AND POLICE PATROL CARS AND APC'S ARE MUCH IN EVIDENCE. WE HAVE NO REPORTS OF ARRESTS OR SERIOUS INJURIES. A NUMBER OF AMERICAN TOURISTS HAVE BEEN INCONVIENCED, BUT SOME STORES REOPENED TODAY. IM IN PIURA, A BUS WAS BURNED BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON MAY 16, BUT CALM RETURNED TO THE CITY AND BANKS AND STORES ARE OPEN TODAY. THE SIUTATION IN CHIMBOTE WAS TENSE TODAY, AFTER DISTURBANCES AND CLASHES WITH POLICE YESTERDAY. TRANSPORT
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SERVICE IS ABOUT 90 PERCENT NORMAL AND BANKS ARE OPEN. A LOCAL OBSERVER VENTURED THAT THE SITUATION APPEARED TO BE RETURNING TO NORMAL, BUT THAT RUMORS OF A STRIKE IN THE STEEL PLANT WERE CIRCULATING. TACNA, IN THE EXTREME SOUTH, IS REPORTEDLY VERY TENSE, WITH INCREASED NUMBERS OF POLICE IN THE STREETS AND PUBLIC PLACES. PUBLIC TRANSPORT WAS REDUCED, AS GASOLINE WAS SOLD AT THE NEW, HIGHER PRICES.

9. PART REACTIONS - APRA'S ARMANDO VILLANUEVA, IN A 20 MINUTE TV APPEARANCE LAST NIGHT, CALLED FOR AN END TO THE PRIVILEGES "STILL NOTORIOUS IN SOME SECTORS," E.G. THE MILITARY AND, IN THE NAME OF HIS PARTY, DEMANDED MORE COMPLETE INFORMATION ON THE FOREIGN AND INTERNAL DEBT, THE RESULTS OF THE DE LA PUENTE MISSION TO WASHINGTO, AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION. VILLANUEVA, WHO HAS A REPUTATION FOR BEING APRA'S HARD LINER, WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE GOP, AND VERY SERIOU BUT NOT STRIDENT IN HIS PRESENTATION. HE CALLED FOR A UNITED NATIONAL EFFORT TO CONFRONT PERU'S PROBLEM, WITH PRIVILEGES FOR NONE, A SHARE OF THE SACRIFICES FOR ALL. ALSO ON TV LAST NIGHT, PPC NO. 2 CANDIDATE MARIO POLAR UGARTECHE SAID THAT THE NEWIST ECONOMIC MEASURES WERE A CLEAR INDICATION THAT THE "REVOLUTION" HAD FAILED. HE CALLED ON THE GOP TO RESPECT THE POPULAR WILL AS EXPRESSED IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS AND TO CONVOKE GENERAL ELECTIONS AS SOON AS THE ASSEMBLY HAS FINISHED ITS TASK OF DRAFTING A NEW CONSITUION. HIS TONE WAS CRITICAL BUT HE ALSO AVOIDED STRIDENCY. THE COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLISHED A COMMUNIQUE YESTERDAY URGING ITS MEMBERS AND ALL PRUVIANS NOT TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF REACTIONARY MANIPULATORS BY PARTICIPATING IN LOOTING AND RIOTING. IT DEMANDED IMMEDIATE, EFFECTIVE PRICE INCREASES AND BLAIMED THE IMF FOR WHAT IT CALCULATES TO BE A 100 PERCENT INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING. THE PCP CALLS FOR A MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE OF 50 PERCENT CALLING THE SALARY INCREASES DICTATED BY THE GOP "LAUGHABLE." THE COMMUNIQUE PLACES THE
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BLAME FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION THE "OLIGARCHIC, PRO-IMPERIALIST REACTION" REPRESENTED BY THE SOCIETY OF INDUSTRIES, APRA AND THE PPC.

WE HAVE NOT SEEN COMMUNIQUE OF OTHER LEFTIST PARTIES (PSR, PDC, ARS AND FOCEP). FRINGE RIGHTIST CANDIDATE CARMEN LEGUIA (PDRP) DENOUNCED GOP'S LACK OF DIRECTION AND SAID THAT THE ECONOMIC MEASURES WILL FAVOR THE EXTREME RIGHT AND LEFT. ROGER CARCERES' PUNO-BASED NATIONAL FRONT OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS (FNTC), WHICH HAS A RALLY SCHEDULED FOR MAY 18 IN LIMA'S PLAZA SAN MARTIN, HAS ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE CALLING FOR WAGE INCREASES AND PARTIAL RESTORATION OF SUBSIDIES ON BASIC FOOD STUFFS. AS FOR THE ULTRA-LEFT UDP'S PLANS TO MARCH ON THE PALACE THIS EVENING, ONLY ABOUT 100 STUDENTS ASSEMBLED NEAR UDP HEADQUARTERS BY 6:00 P.M. AND THEY WERE DISPERSED BY NUMEROUS POLICE FORCES WHO REMAIN ON GUARD IN THE PLAZA. TODAY'S "EL PERUANO" CARRIED AS INCONSPICUOUS ITEM THAT UDP ONCE AGAIN HAS LOST ITS RIGHT TO FREE TV AND RADIO TIME.

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10. ELECTION POSTPONEMENT REQUESTED - GOP-OWNED "LA CRONICA" REPORTS THAT THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (JNE) WILL RULE MAY 18 ON PETITIONS BY RIGHTIST/POPULIST UN AND FNTC (TWO MINOR PARTIES) THAT THE JUNE 4 ELECTIONS BE POSTPONED FOR TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS. BOTH PARTIES ALLEGE THAT THE ELECTORAL MACHINERY WILL NOT BE READY IN TIME IN AREAS OUTSIDE OF LIMA. PRIVATELY, APRA LEADERS HAVE EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT THE ELECTORAL MACHINEERY WILL BE READY BY JUNE 4 BUT GAVE NO INDICATION THAT THE PARTY WAS PLANNING TO REQUEST A POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTION. THE JNE CAN ONLY MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE PRESIDENT,WHO MUST MAKE THE FINAL DECISION. JNE PRESIDENT MONTOYA MANFREDI EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT ALL WOULD BE READY FOR JUNE 4, AND THAT SHOULD A POSTPONEMENT APPEAR NECESSARY, IT WOULD BE "FOR A FEW DAYS ONLY."

11. LABOR DEVELOPMENTS - STRIKING TEACHERS, REPRESENTED BY LEFTIST SUTEP, HAVE SENT AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRRESIDENT, ASKING THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO CONSIDER THEIR DEMANDS. THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE PUBLISHED A COMMUNIQUE MAY 16, SAYING THAT THE SUSPENSION OF ALL CLASSES WAS A TEMPORARY MEASURE AND THAT INSTRUCTION WOULD BEGIN AGAIN AS SOON AS THE SITUATION PERMITS.

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NONCOMMUNIST LABOR CONFEDERATIONS ARE TRYING TO DEVELOP A "COMMON FRONT"

CALLING FOR CERTAIN PRICE AND SALARY READJUSTMENTS AND DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES FROM VIOLENCE OR A GENERAL STRIKE. RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING

IN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT THE PCP AND THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED CGTP ARE PLANNING A NATIONAL STRIKE FOR MAY 26, ALTHOUGH CGTP TALKS WITH TRANSPORT WORKERS ARE STILL CONTINUING. MEANWHILE, THE LABOR MINISTRY HAS DECLARED THE BANK WORKERS' STRIKE ILLEGAL, WHICH COULD LEAD TO FIRING OF WORKERS IF STRIKE CONTINUED SEVERAL DAYS. HOWEVER MOST BANKS WERE OPEN TODAY.

12. GOP VIEWS.

GENERAL PEDRO RICHTER PRADA (HEAD OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF) TOLD ARMY ATTACHE TODAY THAT THE ARMED FORCES WERE DETERMINED TO ADHERE TO THE JUNE 4 ELECTION SCHEDULE. TURNING TO THE PROTESTS OUTSIDE OF LIMA, RICHTER PRADA SAID THAT THE POSITIONING OF TROOPS IN QREQUIPA, HUANUCO AND CUZCO HAS LIMITED THE CHANCES OF MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS THERE, AND HE THOUGHT THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENCE AHD DIMINISHED SLIGHTLY IN THESE CENTERS. THE ARMY, HE WENT ON, WAS QUITE CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO AVOID BLOODSHED DESPITE THE PROVOCATIONS OF THE LEFT WHOSE LABOR AND POLITICAL PROTESTS CONSTITUTE THE MOST SERIOUS CURRENT PROBLEM.

13. FOLLOWING ARE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS:

A. EXCHANGE RATE: THE EXCHANGE RATE REMAINED RELATIVELY STABLE MAY 17 AT AROUND 150/\$. BUYING AND SELLING RATES WERE 149.65 AND 150.40 RESPECTIVELY (COMPARED TO 149.50 AND 150.25 ON MAY 16.)

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B. ADDITIONAL PRICE RISES: INCREASES IN ELECTRIC POWER RATES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND BUS FARES OUTSIDE OF THE LIMA AREA WERE PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE. ELECTRIC POWER RATES WERE INCREASED BY MINISTERIAL RESOLUTION (MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINES) FOR ELECTROLIMA AND ELECTROPERU CONSUMERS IN VARIOUS AREAS OF PERU. RESIDENTIAL RATES IN LIMA AREA (SERVED BY ELECTROLIMA) WERE INCREASED BY 65-75 PERCENT. IN THE AREQUIPA AREA THE INCREASE WAS 55-58 PERCENT AND IN THE HUANCAYO AREA, 34-47 PERCENT. RATES FOR INDUSTRIAL USERS ALSO INCREASED GENERALLY BY 52-79 PERCENT. BUS FARE INCREASES OUTSIDE OF LIMA APPEAR GENERALLY TO BE IN 40-50 PERCENT RANGE. TRUCK FREIGHT CHARGES HAVE NOT INCREASED YET, BUT ARE EXPECTED TO SHORTLY.

C. MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE TO HEAD INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMISSION: DECREE LAW NO. 22189 PUBLISHED MAY 17 STATES THAT THE MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE, SILVA RUETE, WILL PRESIDE OVER THE INTERMINISTERIAL COMMISSION ON ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS, MADE UP OF THE MINISTERS OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, TOURISM AND INTEGRATION; AGRICULTURE AND FOOD; ENERGY AND MINES; TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION; FISHERIES; HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION; AND THE CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING INSTITUTE. THE INTERMINISTERIAL COMMISSION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED SEVERAL YEARS AGO TO BE PRESIDED OVER BY THE PRIME MINISTER. ALL DECREE LAWS AND SUPREME DECREES OF AN ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL NATURE WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION PRIOR TO THEIR SUBMISSION TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR APPROVAL.

D. MANUEL MOREYRA AT CENTRAL BANK: GOP MAY 17 PUBLISHED SUPREME RESOLUTION NAMING MANUEL MOREYRA LOREDO AS PRESIDENT OF BOARD AND EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL RESERVE BANK. HIS PREDECESSOR GERMAN
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DE LA MELENA WAS NAMED TO BE AN ADVISOR TO THE MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE. RUMORS CONTINUE STRONG THAT ALONSO POLAR WILL BE APPOINTED GENERAL MANAGER OF THE CENTRAL BANK, THE POSITION HE HELD UNDER CARLOS SANTISTEBAN.

E. FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENTS: WE UNDERSTAND FROM LOCAL U.S. BANK REP THAT STEERING COMMITTEES MET 3 P.M. MAY 16 IN NEW YORK TO DISCUSS RECENT CHANGES IN GOP ECONOMIC TEAM AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW AUSTERITY MEASURES. WHILE BANKERS WERE DISPOSED TO VIEW THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS FAVORABLY, IT WAS NOTED THAT NO FORMAL WORD HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM NEW MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE AS TO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS ASSISTANCE, SO IT WAS DECIDED TO AWAIT WORD FROM LIMA IN THIS REGARD. FOREIGN BANKERS REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST NOT ONLY IN NEW MEASURES AND NEW ECONOMIC TEAM BUT ALSO IN NEW TEAM'S PLANS FOR MOVEMENT OF EXCHANGE RATE. BANKERS IN NEW YORK ARE EXPECTING A GOP MISSION EARLY IN WEEK OF MAY 22 TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS. MEANWHILE BANKS WILL ROLL OVER ANY MATURITIES COMING DUE.

F. VICE MINISTER OF FINANCE ALCANTERA, BESIDES NOTING HIS OWN IMMINENT DEPARTURE FROM THE GOP, CONFIRMED THAT GOP TEAM, PROBABLY HEADED BY MOREYRA, WOULD LEAVE FOR WASHINGTON SHORTLY. HE STATED THAT NET IMPACT ON CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET OF ALL RECENT MEASURES WAS 39 BILLION SOLES; THIS INCLUDES ESTIMATED 6 BILLION SOL EFFECT OF WAGE INCREASE AND ASSUMES 150 EXCHANGE RATE. ALCANTARA DID NOT EXPECT OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE TO MOVE MUCH MORE IN NEAR TERM, ALTHOUGH IT APPEARED CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WAS NOT FULLY INFORMED ON CURRENT EXCHANGE RATE STRATEGY. WHILE STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE ACTION BY PRIVATE BANKS, ALCANTARA NOTED THAT RECENT OCCIDENTAL LOAN, A ROLLOVER OF THE VENEZUELAN SWAP AND LIKELY CREDIT FROM THE ANDEAN FUND (CAF) WOULD HELP OUT OVER THE FEW WEEKS.

COMMENT: IMMEDIATE ATTENTION FOCUSES ON DISTURBANCES IN THE PROVINCES. THE GOP APPEARS TO ACTING FIRMLY TO RESTORE ORDER WHILE DOING ITS BEST TO AVOID VIOLENCE. THE REPORTS THAT THE SITUATION HAS IMPROVED SLIGHTLY MAY 17 IN AREQUIPA AND DUZCO ARE ENCOURAGING, AND THE NEXT DAY OR TWO SHOULD GIVE US A CLEARER IDEA OF WHETHER THE GOP CAN RETURN THESE CITIES TO NORMALCY WITHOUT WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE.

IN LIMA, AND PERHAPS OF BROADER NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE, THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE CGTP AND THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT CALL A GENERAL STRIKE FOR LATE NEXT WEEK. THIS WILL BE A CRUCIAL DECISION FOR THE LEFT. THEY SPLIT INTERNALLY AND HAD LITTLE SUCCESS IN THEIR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY STRIKE ATTEMPTS. NOW THEY WILL LIKELY HAVE BROADER PUBLIC SYMPATHY IN PROTESTING THE NEW AUSTERITY MEASURES, BUT THEY CAN ALSO COUNT ON A MUCH FIRMER GOVERNMENT RESPONSE. THE ANTICIPATED REJECTION OF THE STRIKE CALL BY NON-COMMUNIST UNIONS AND THE MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES FURTHER LIMITS THE CHANCES OF A SUCCESSFUL STRIKE.

POSTPONMENT OF THE ELECTIONS FOR A WEEK OR SO TO COMPLETE ADMINISTRATIVE PREPARATIONS IS QUITE POSSIBLE, BUT THIS SHOULDN'T BE INTERPRETED AS A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE GOP SCENARIO. APRA, WHOSE CONSTITUENCY IS HEAVIER IN THE PROVINCES, HAS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT LACK OF PREPARATIONS FOR SERVICING A FULL TURNOUT IN THOSE AREAS, AND CURRENT

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DISTURBANCES ONLY EXACERBATE THIS PROBLEM. IN ANY EVENT, THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION HAS BEEN ACTING QUITE INDEPENDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND WILL LIKELY MAKE ITS RECOMMENDATION ON THE TECHNICAL MERITS OF THE CASE.
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